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ABSTRACT

A survey of the 107 California community colleges was conducted during Spring 1980 to assess the extent to which college administrators had adopted marketing techniques. The survey instrument listed 31 such techniques under six general categories: marketing surveys, direct advertising, public information, high school recruiting, community services, and administrative activities such as the establishment of a marketing task force. Respondents were asked to indicate: (1) which techniques had been used during the past two years; (2) their perceptions of the effectiveness of those techniques; and (3) which techniques the colleges were planning to use during the following year. Major findings, based on a 72% response rate, reveal that high school visitations, mailed class schedules, newspapers, news releases, and the provision of facilities for community use were the most frequently employed techniques. While the commitment of resources to marketing, the establishment of a marketing task force, and surveys of non-returning students were the least frequently used techniques, these three appeared in the list of activities the colleges most frequently planned to use. Among techniques that had been used, those falling under the administrative, public information, and community service categories and the highest effectiveness ratings. The study report analyzes findings and presents summary recommendations. (LP)

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UTILIZATION OF MARKETING TECHNIQUES

IN

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

Judi A. Gregory

Coast Community College District

Paper presented at the CCJCA

1981 Annual Community College Research Conference

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Introduction

In recent years, higher education has become a buyer's market. No longer do colleges enjoy the luxury of admitting only the "cream of the crop" students. With declining enrollments predicted through the 1990s more and more institutions are turning to marketing as a way to ward off almost certain financial crisis. Marketing has become the topic of many conferences, articles, and books during the last decade. However, are colleges doing more than talking about marketing -- are they actually using the marketing approach to adapt to a changing environment or are they merely steping up their public information efforts under a new name?

This study was based on a survey of all 107 California community colleges during the spring of 1980. Seventy-two percent of the colleges responded to the survey, and 39 percent of the responses were completed by the college president. This high rate of response indicates that the topic of marketing is currently an important issue to all of California's community colleges.

The data from the mailed questionnaires were stored on an SPSS file and analyzed using frequency counts and contingency tables. Certain demographic characteristics were analyzed to determine if the use of marketing was related to the institution's age, enrollment, or district structure (multi-or single-college district). However, the results indicated that the use of marketing was unrelated to these characteristics. Therefore, it does not appear that the larger, urban, more complex institutions are approaching the marketing activity differently than smaller institutions. Some of the more interesting findings resulted from a comparison of the most frequently and least frequently used techniques; which techniques that had not previously been used were most frequently planned for future use; comparison of the categories of techniques by frequency of past use and their perceived effectiveness; and the most effective versus least effective technique.

Marketing Techniques Which Have Been Used

One of the major objectives of this study was to determine which specific marketing techniques have been used and which ones colleges are planning to use in the future. Table 1 identifies those techniques which received very widespread use (the ten most frequently used techniques), techniques which were used very little (the ten least frequently used techniques), and the percentage of responding institutions who have used these techniques.

Table 1
Rank Order of Most Frequently and
Least Frequently Used Marketing Techniques

	Rank Order of Use	Percent of Institutions
Most Frequently Used Techniques		
High school visitations by college faculty	1	97%
Class schedules mailed to district households	2	94
Newspapers	3	92
News releases	4	92
Use of facilities by community groups	5	91
Arrange special cultural events	6	87
Radio	7	86
Direct mail	8	83
Participation in college days/nights	9	82
Provide information at shopping centers	10	68
Provide location signs on highway		
Least Frequently Used Techniques		
Institute a college marketing task force	22	31
Commitment of resources to marketing efforts	23	31
Surveys of non-returning students	24	27
Surveys of alumni	25	26
Ads placed in high school newspapers	26	25
Establish a position in charge of marketing	27	23
Maintain a brochure case on campus	28	18
Magazines	29	17
Surveys of students accepted but didn't attend	30	16
Catalogs mailed to district households	31	8

As shown in Table 1, the first five "most frequently used" techniques had been utilized by more than 90 percent of the respondents, which supports the findings of previous studies that certain techniques are almost universally used. However, the question arises as to whether or not these techniques are being used in the "marketing" sense. Marketing orientation involves finding out what the consumer wants and then providing the product or service that satisfies that want. In contrast, public information focuses on putting the organization in a favorable light. Even though this study did not attempt to assess an institution's motive for utilizing specific techniques, some general patterns were identified.

The infrequent use of surveys points to a systematic lack of marketing orientation. A well-designed and effectively conducted survey can provide invaluable information as to the wants and needs of various college constituencies. For instance, only 16 percent of the responding institutions had surveyed students who had been accepted but then did not attend. It seems that since this constituency had indicated enough interest to apply for admission, it would be important to find out why they chose not to attend. Knowing the reasons why students do not choose an institution can present strategies for change.

Table 1 indicates that all three of the administrative techniques fell into the "least frequently used" category. The finding highlights a general lack of administrative support to the marketing effort. It is interesting to note, however, that even though these techniques were not included in the "most frequently used" category, at least 23 percent of the responding institutions had used one or more of these techniques.

Marketing Techniques Institutions Plan to Use

In assessing which marketing techniques institutions were planning to use, the analysis was limited to those techniques planned for use by institutions that had not used them in the past. The objective was to determine whether these institutions would choose to utilize techniques which had already received widespread use by other institutions. Table 2 lists the top ten techniques most frequently planned for use.

Table 2
Rank Order of Techniques
by Most Frequent Planned Use

Technique	Rank Order of Planned Use	Percent of Institutions
Newspapers	1	50%
Class schedules mailed to households	2	40
Commitment of resources to marketing	3	40
Surveys of general public	4	37
Providing information at shopping centers	5	36
Participation in college days/nights	6	36
Institution of a college marketing task force	7	36
Direct mail	8	31
Surveys of non-returning students	9	29
Radio	10	27

Of the techniques displayed in Table 2, only five were also included in the "most frequently used" category in Table 1. These were:

- newspapers
- class schedules mailed to district households
- college participation in college days/nights
- direct mail
- radio

All five of these techniques are considered to be universally-used by community colleges so the high ranking for future use is not surprising. Also, these techniques appear to support the public information function as opposed to the marketing function. In contrast, three of the techniques in Table 2 ranked in the "least frequently used" category of Table 1. They were:

- commitment of resources to marketing efforts
- institution of a college marketing task force
- surveys of non-returning students

Four of the techniques in Table 2 belong to the Administrative and Survey categories, which have received very little use in the past. This finding points to a trend away from the public information approach and an emphasis on the marketing approach -- giving the consumers what they want. It is interesting to note that all three of the Administrative techniques were among the top ten "planned for use." This implies a changing administrative philosophy towards the need for a formal structure and commitment in order to achieve market orientation.

CCJCA's Project People

The objective of CCJCA's Project People was to develop a promotional campaign which could be utilized by all 107 California community colleges. The end product of this project was a series of radio and television public service announcements, a slide show and brochures which could be individualized to each college, and a series of background news releases. Fifty-two percent of the respondents had used these materials and another 22 percent indicated they were planning to use them.

Generally, those who had used these materials did not feel they had been very effective. The low effectiveness rating may be due to the fact that this study was conducted shortly after the distribution of the materials. Many of the colleges may not have had time to implement these materials into their campaign. Also, at the time of this study institutions may not have had sufficient time to formally evaluate the materials' effectivenesss. Therefore, no conclusions were drawn as to the success of Project People, and it was recommended that a separate study be conducted to determine the project's impact.

The Most Effective Marketing Techniques

Table 3 displays a rank order comparison of the categories of techniques which have received the most widespread use and those categories which were considered to be most effective.

Table 3

Categories of Marketing Techniques:
Rank Order Comparison of Use Versus Effectiveness

Most Frequently Used		Most Effective	
1.	Community Service	1.	Administrative
2.	Direct Advertising	2.	Public Information
3.	High School Recruiting	3.	Community Service
4.	Public Information	4.	Direct Advertising
5.	Surveys	5.	High School Recruiting
6.	Administrative	6.	Surveys

The most important finding from Table 3 is the comparison of the past use and perceived effectiveness of the Administrative techniques category. Even though administrative techniques had been utilized by approximately 30 percent of the responding institutions, the average effectiveness rating, by those who had used them, was quite high.

As shown in Table 3, surveys have not been frequently used in the past, and those institutions that have used them do not consider them to be very effective. One explanation for this low use-low effectiveness could be due to the fact that considerable effort, expense, and expertise are required to conduct a viable survey of any constituency. In general, community colleges have not relied on research findings as a basis for administrative decision making. Consequently, most institutions are not willing to provide sufficient resources and administrative support for development, implementation, and interpretation of such surveys.

A rank order listing of the most effective and least effective techniques which have been used in the past is displayed in Table 4. It is interesting to note that those techniques which were considered most effective were not necessarily the techniques which had received the most frequent use as shown in Table 1. For example, class schedules mailed to households had been used by 94 percent of the

responding institutions and was considered to be very effective. In contrast, only 23 percent of the institutions had established a position in charge of college marketing but this technique was considered as effective as mailing class schedules to homes.

Table 4
Rank Order of Most Effective and
Least Effective Marketing Techniques

	Rank Order of Effectiveness	Weighted Mean
Most Effective Techniques		
Class schedules mailed to households	1	3.75
Establish a position in charge of marketing	2	3.75
Direct mail	3	3.56
Catalogs mailed to households	4	3.50
High school visitations by college faculty	5	3.47
Commitment of resources to marketing efforts	6	3.46
Surveys of local industry	7	3.39
Newspapers	8	3.37
Regularly distributed brochures	9	3.34
Surveys of alumni	10	3.33
Least Effective Techniques		
Surveys of high school seniors	21	3.10
Radio	22	3.10
Television	23	3.08
Maintain brochure case	24	3.08
Magazines	25	3.00
Posters placed in spots frequented by high school students	26	2.90
Ads placed in high school newspapers	27	2.89
Surveys of students who withdrew	28	2.83
Surveys of non-returning students	29	2.83
CCJCA Project People materials	30	2.63
Surveys of students accepted but didn't attend	31	2.08

Another interesting finding in Table 4 is the high effectiveness rating of catalogs mailed to households. This was the least frequently used technique, but it was rated as being very effective. The infrequent use of mailing catalogs may be

due to the postage cost. Since almost every institution mails class schedules to residents, they may not feel that the additional expense is warranted. However, the high effectiveness rating may indicate that class schedules do not generate sufficient interest to attract every potential student. This is further evidence that public information activities (traditional class schedules) are only part of the marketing effort.

Conclusions and Recommendations

After analyzing the frequency of past use of individual techniques, a general conclusion may be drawn that in the past institutions have emphasized public information activities. The main objective was to get information about the organization out to the public and let the product sell itself. However, the findings of this study point to a trend toward emphasizing the marketing approach -- finding out what the public wants and needs and then utilizing the public information activities to publicize the fact that we can serve their needs.

RECOMMENDATION

> *Community college administrators should receive more exposure to formal marketing theory and practices. Leadership in this area could be provided by statewide organizations such as the California Community and Junior College Association and the Association of California Community College Administrators.*

The wide divergence between the frequency of use of some techniques and their effectiveness may indicate that institutions are unable to accurately evaluate the effects of their activities. It may be that colleges are using a trial-and-error approach --try one technique and if desired results are not obtained, try something else. The fact that nine techniques have been used by more than 80 percent of the respondents could mean that institutions use what everyone else uses.

The effectiveness of a marketing technique appears to be related to the degree of organizational commitment to the marketing effort. This is evidenced by the fact that techniques which require such a commitment (such as Administrative and Survey techniques) have been rated as most effective even though they have received little past use. In addition, these techniques have also ranked high on the priorities for future use.

RECOMMENDATION

Institutions should adopt formal evaluation procedures in order to assess the effectiveness of their activities. However, a review of the literature has not revealed an adequate evaluation model for college marketing efforts.

The most important finding of this study is the apparent trend toward increased use of techniques which require organizational commitment and formalization of marketing efforts. There appears to be a changing administrative view of the value of marketing as a integral element of community college management. However, institutions should not attempt to implement these administrative techniques without integrating them into a formal marketing plan. Without such a plan the institution may limit its potential for success in its overall marketing effort.

The institutional research role in marketing could be one of facilitation -- bringing the entire organization together into an integrated implementation of marketing. The obvious institutional research activities would be marketing research and the development of an evaluation plan. However, a more critical function would be to generate institutional awareness and support of the marketing effort.

RECOMMENDATION

Institutions planning to implement marketing should do so using a planned approach based on an examination of the literature and past experience of other institutions, accompanied by a willingness to make a long-term organizational commitment to such an effort.

This paper presents highlights of a more detailed report prepared on the study. If additional information is desired, the reader should contact the author at Coast Community College District, 1370 Adams Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

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UTILIZATION OF MARKETING TECHNIQUES
IN
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Instructions

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this survey is to assess the extent to which marketing techniques have been, or are planning to be, used at your college. In addition to identifying the techniques, you are also asked to indicate your perceptions as to the effectiveness of those marketing techniques which you have used in the past.

The instrument lists various marketing techniques which have been used by educational institutions throughout the country. In completing the survey, please utilize the following procedures:

1. Column A - please check any of those techniques which have been used at your college in the last two years.

2. Column B - please check any of those techniques which your college is planning to use in the next year.

3. Column C - please indicate your perceptions as to the effectiveness of those techniques you checked in Column A.

Please indicate your college's name at the bottom of page 2 of the questionnaire. Confidentiality will be assured by the design of the report which will show only aggregate results. The college name is requested so your college can be matched with previously published demographic data.

The response from your college is important to the survey. However, to assure that your input is included in the results, would you please return the questionnaire by March 21, 1980.

If you wish to receive a copy of the survey results, please indicate this by checking the appropriate box and include your name and title. Thank you for taking time from your very busy schedule to participate in this survey.

Judi Gregory

Judi Gregory, Program Facilitator
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Coast Community College District
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(714) 556-5528

UTILIZATION OF MARKETING TECHNIQUES IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

	A CHECK THOSE TECHNIQUES YOU HAVE USED IN THE LAST 2 YEARS	B CHECK THOSE TECHNIQUES YOU ARE PLANNING TO USE IN THE NEXT YEAR	MARKETING TECHNIQUE		C Extremely Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Not Effective At All	No Opinion
			1 MARKETING SURVEYS OF:						
.1	☐	☐	.1 General public	.1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.2	☐	☐	.2 Currently enrolled students	.2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.3	☐	☐	.3 Non-returning students	.3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.4	☐	☐	.4 Students who withdrew during semester	.4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.5	☐	☐	.5 Students accepted to college but did not attend	.5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.6	☐	☐	.6 High school seniors	.6	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.7	☐	☐	.7 Graduates	.7	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.8	☐	☐	.8 Local industry	.8	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.9	☐	☐	.9 Other_____	.9	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			2 DIRECT ADVERTISING:						
.1	☐	☐	.1 Newspapers	.1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.2	☐	☐	.2 Radio	.2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.3	☐	☐	.3 Television	.3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.4	☐	☐	.4 Magazines	.4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.5	☐	☐	.5 CCJCA's "Project People" materials	.5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.6	☐	☐	.6 Direct mail	.6	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.7	☐	☐	.7 Other_____	.7	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			3 PUBLIC INFORMATION:						
.1	☐	☐	.1 Class schedules mailed to district households	.1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.2	☐	☐	.2 Catalogs mailed to district households	.2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.3	☐	☐	.3 Regularly distributed newsletter	.3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.4	☐	☐	.4 Regularly distributed brochures	.4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.5	☐	☐	.5 New releases	.5	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.6	☐	☐	.6 Providing information at shopping centers	.6	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.7	☐	☐	.7 Other_____	.7	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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(Continued on Reverse Side)

A: CHECK THOSE TECHNIQUES YOU HAVE USED IN THE LAST 2 YEARS	B: CHECK THOSE TECHNIQUES YOU ARE PLANNING TO USE IN THE NEXT YEAR	MARKETING TECHNIQUE	C: Extremely Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Not Effective At All	No Opinion
		4 HIGH SCHOOL RECRUITING:					
.1 ☐	☐	.1 Visitations by college faculty/counselors	.1 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.2 ☐	☐	.2 Posters placed in spots frequented by high school students	.2 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.3 ☐	☐	.3 Participation in college days/nights or college fairs	.3 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.4 ☐	☐	.4 Ads placed in high school newspapers	.4 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.5 ☐	☐	.5 Other_____	.5 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
		5 COMMUNITY SERVICE:					
.1 ☐	☐	.1 Encourage use of facilities by community groups	.1 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.2 ☐	☐	.2 Arrange special events of cultural benefit	.2 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.3 ☐	☐	.3 Maintain brochure case accessible when college closed	.3 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.4 ☐	☐	.4 Place signs on highways indicating college location	.4 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.5 ☐	☐	.5 Other_____	.5 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
		6 ADMINISTRATIVE:					
.1 ☐	☐	.1 Institute a college marketing task force	.1 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.2 ☐	☐	.2 Establish a position in charge of college marketing	.2 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.3 ☐	☐	.3 Increased resources for marketing efforts	.3 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
.4 ☐	☐	.4 Other_____	.4 ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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COLLEGE_____

Do you wish to receive a copy of the survey results? _____ Yes _____ No

_____ Name _____ Title

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A CHECK THOSE TECHNIQUES YOU HAVE USED IN THE LAST 2 YEARS	B CHECK THOSE TECHNIQUES YOU ARE PLANNING TO USE IN THE NEXT YEAR	MARKETING TECHNIQUE	C Extremely Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Not Effective At All	No Opinion
		4 HIGH SCHOOL RECRUITING:					
.1 ___	___	.1 Visitations by college faculty/counselors	.1 ___	___	___	___	___
.2 ___	___	.2 Posters placed in spots frequented by high school students	.2 ___	___	___	___	___
.3 ___	___	.3 Participation in college days/nights or college fairs	.3 ___	___	___	___	___
.4 ___	___	.4 Ads placed in high school newspapers	.4 ___	___	___	___	___
.5 ___	___	.5 Other_____	.5 ___	___	___	___	___
		5 COMMUNITY SERVICE:					
.1 ___	___	.1 Encourage use of facilities by community groups	.1 ___	___	___	___	___
.2 ___	___	.2 Arrange special events of cultural benefit	.2 ___	___	___	___	___
.3 ___	___	.3 Maintain brochure case accessible when college closed	.3 ___	___	___	___	___
.4 ___	___	.4 Place signs on highways indicating college location	.4 ___	___	___	___	___
.5 ___	___	.5 Other_____	.5 ___	___	___	___	___
		6 ADMINISTRATIVE:					
.1 ___	___	.1 Institute a college marketing task force	.1 ___	___	___	___	___
.2 ___	___	.2 Establish a position in charge of college marketing	.2 ___	___	___	___	___
.3 ___	___	.3 Increased resources for marketing efforts	.3 ___	___	___	___	___
.4 ___	___	.4 Other_____	.4 ___	___	___	___	___

COLLEGE_____

Do you wish to receive a copy of the survey results? _____ Yes _____ No

_____ Name _____ Title